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Mattox carries Ruby's gun to investigators

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The snub-nosed revolver used by Jack Ruby to kill Lee Harvey Oswald was to be turned over to the House Assassinations Committee for ballistics tests today by U.S. Rep. Jim Mattox, who agreed to carry the gun to Washington for the executor of Ruby's estate.

Mattox, a friend of the Dallas attorney Jules F. Mayer, executor of Ruby's estate, said he had brought the weapon by airplane to the capital Sunday and would turn it over to the committee in executive session this afternoon.

"I felt it best not to disclose I was bringing it to Washington until I got it here because of the value of the gun," Mattox said. "He (Mayer) had been offered $125,000 for it, and frankly, it is probably worth a good bit more than that."

Mattox said Mayer asked him to deliver the gun personally to the committee while it was in session so the committee would be on record as promising to return the weapon undamaged.

"Since early June, the assassinations committee had been attempting to serve Mayer with a subpoena and obtain access to the weapon," Mattox said. "He was reluctant to accept service and turn the gun over because of the position the government took toward Marina Oswald and her attempts to obtain the rifle Oswald purportedly used to assassinate President Kennedy.

"There was a long drawn-out court battle which cost $75,000, and she still was not able to obtain the gun."

Despite written assurances Ruby's gun would be returned, Mayer insisted that Mattox turn it over to the committee rather than an investigator, according to the Dallas congressman. Mattox said Mayer is charged with maintaining the assets of Ruby's estate and "this is about the only thing left" of value.

Mattox said the committee intended to run ballistics tests on the .38-Special Cobra Colt and trace its origin to learn how Ruby obtained the gun. He said he anticipated the committee would have the gun for approximately two weeks.

Mayer could not be reached today for comment.